

Message Text

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AMCONSUL JOHANNESBURG
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C O N F I D E N T I A L DUBAN 0578

EO 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINS, SF
SUBJ: SOUTH AFRICAN UNREST: WHY NATAL IS QUIET (II)

REF: 76 DURBAN 448 (NOTAL)

1. SUMMARY: REFTEL ANALYZED WHY NATAL DID NOT FOLLOW A
SIMILAR PATTERN OF VIOLENCE AND UNREST AS REST OF S.A. IN
1976. SAME FORCES WHICH KEPT PROVINCE QUIET THEN APPEAR STILL
TO BE OPERATING-ALTHOUGH THERE HAVE BEEN A FEW NON-POLITICAL
INCIDENTS IN BLACK SCHOOLS. AMONG PRINCIPAL FORCES ARE
HOMOGENEITY OF BLACK POPULATION (ZULUZ) PRESENCE OF ACKNOW-
LEEDED LEADER WHO ESPOUSES NONVIOLENCE (CHIEF BUTHELEZI),
BETTER LIVING CONDITIONS NEAR TRADITIONAL HOMELAND,
TRADITIONALLY STRICT PARENTAL AND TRIBAL DISCIPLINE, AND
TIGHT POLICE CONTROL OF DISSIDENCE. ADDITIONAL FACTORS ARE
GROWING INFLUENCE OF INKATHA MOVEMENT AND LESSER DEGREE OF
SOPHISTICATION AMONG NATAL BLACKS (AS OPPOSED TO REEF'S).
NEVERTHELESS BLACKS IN NATAL ARE PROBABLY AS BITTER AS THOSE
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IN SOWETO, AND WHILE FOR NOW THEY MAY REMAIN NONVIOLENT, IT
IS DOUBTFUL THEY CAN DO SO PERMANENTLY. END SUMMARY

2. IN YEAR SINCE REFTEL, WHICH ANALYZED WHY PATTERN OF
VIOLENCE AND UNREST IN MID-1976 HAD NOT SPREAD TO NATAL,
PROVINCE HAS CONTINUED TO BE RELATIVELY QUIET. SCATTERED

INCIDENTS OF STUDENT UNREST HAVE TAKEN PLACE, BUT UNLIKE SOWETO AND PRETORIA TOWNSHIPS THEY INVARIABLY HAVE HAD THEIR ROOTS IN INTERNAL DISCIPLINARY PROBLEMS AND NOT POLITICAL PROTEST. MOST RECENT EXAMPLE, CLOSING OF ELITE KWADLANGEZWA H.S. NEAR ZULULAND UNIVERSITY AFTER A STUDENT RIOT (DURBAN A-71) WAS, ACCORDING TO RELIABLE SOURCES, A PRODUCT OF TOO STRICT A REGIMEN IMPOSED ON STUDENTS BY ADMINISTRATORS. EVEN AT ZULULAND UNIVERSITY, SCENE OF EXTENSIVE VIOLENCE AND DAMAGE IN JUNE, 1976, DISTURBANCE, WHILE STUDENTS EXPRESS RADICAL ANTI-SAG AND ANTI-APARTHEID SENTIMENTS, THEIR ONLY REACTION TO REEF DISTURBANCES HAS BEEN TO RETREAT INTO AN ALL-PERVASIVE SULLENNESS. (SEE DURBAN A-53)

3. REFTEL ENUMERATED CONSENSUS OF OPINION OF REASONS FOR RELATIVE QUIET IN 1976. THESE ARE STILL OPERATIVE TODAY. PEHAPS MOST IMPORTANT IS HOMOGENEITY OF OVERWHELMING MAJORITY BLACK POPULATION (ZULUS) WITH STILL-CLOSE BONDS TO TRADITIONAL CULTURE BECAUSE OF NEARNESS OF HOMELAND; AND INCLUSION OF DURBAN'S TWO LARGEST TOWNSHIPS (UMLAZI AND KWAMASHU) WITHIN KWAZULU. ZULUS HAVE A RELATIVELY BETTER QUALITY OF LIFE IN AREA'S TEMPERATE CLIMATE, AND TOWNSHIP DWELLERS LIVE ON LAND ON WHICH THEY MAY HAVE FREEHOLD TENURE. THIS GIVES THEM A STAKE IN COMMUNITY AND A PERMANENCE WHICH THEY WOULD BE RELATIVELY LEERY TO SEE THREATENED BY PROTESTING YOUTHS BENT ON DESTRUCTION OF PROPERTY. IN ADDITION STRICT TRADITIONAL PARENTAL AND TRIBAL DISCIPLINE IS STILL STRONG BOTH IN URBAN AND RURAL AREAS.

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RM MOST ZULUS ARE RESPONSIVE TO LEADERSHIP OF CHIEF GATSHA BUTHELEZI WHO SO FAR HAS ESCHewed VIOLENCE AND CRITICIZED THOSE WHO HAVE ENGAGED IN IT. REFTEL ALSO CITED THEORY THAT SAG, FEARING REPEAT OF HISTORICAL PROBLEMS WITH ZULU NATION SINCE ZULU WARS, HAS KEPT AN ESPECIALLY TIGHT CLAMP ON DISSIDENT ACTIVITIES HERE. POLICE INTELLIGENCE VIA WELL-PLACED NUMEROUS INFORMERS IS EXCELLENT AND DISSIDENTS ARE GENERALLY WARY OF SEEKING RECRUITS FOR FEAR OF DETECTION.

4. AN IMPORTANT ADDITIONAL FACTOR, CLOSELY TIED TO ZULU HOMOGENEITY AND BUTHELEZI'S LEADERSHIP, IS THE GROWING STRENGTH AND INFLUENCE OF INKATHA MOVEMENT. WITH MEMBERSHIP OVER 120,000 (INCLUDING MORE AND MORE INTELLECTUALS) AND FAIRLY STRONG YOUTH BRIGADE INKATHA HAS INCREASED THE REACH OF BUTHELEZI'S POWER AND PHILOSOPHY OVER ZULUS. INKATHA AND BUTHELEZI THUS ACT AS MAIN CONDUITS OF ZULU REACTIONS TO SAG ACTIONS AND POLICIES AND SO FAR, ACT AS A DEFUSING ELEMENT.

5. OTHER FACTORS WHICH SOME OBSERVERS CREDIT WITH KEEPING TENSIONS UNDER CONTROL INCLUDE GREATER INVOLVEMENT OF BLACKS

IN PROVINCIAL AND LOCAL GOVERNMENTAL STRUCTURES (CF. DURBAN A-37 AND A-21). IN ADDITION, AS ONE BLACK SCHOOL INSPECTOR PUT IT, BLACKS IN NATAL ARE LESS SOPHISTICATED THAN THOSE ON THE REEF AND ARE LESS AWARE OF THE MORE RADICAL TRENDS OF THOUGHT WHICH HAVE TAKEN ROOT IN SOWETO.

6. COMMENT: POPULAR JUDGMENT ABOUT ZULUS IS THAT THEY ARE SLOW TO ANGER, BUT ONCE MOBILIZED AND GIVEN SIGNAL, BECOME A DYNAMIC FORCE. AT THE MOMENT ONLY LEADER WHO COULD GIVE SUCH A SIGNAL, BUTUELEZI, APPEARS NOT SO INCLINED. NEVERTHELESS RANCOR AND BITTERNESS AT SAG POLICIES REMAIN STRONG AMONG NATAL BLACKS AND UNLESS PROGRESS TOWARD GREATER POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC RIGHTS IS FORTHCOMING, IT IS HARD TO SEE HOW CALM CAN CONTINUE. EVEN WITH ALL THE FACTORS OBVIATING AGAINST VIOLENCE AND DISSIDENT ACTIVITIES, ONE SPARK EITHER
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HERE OR ON REEF AND/OR A CALL FOR A SHOW OF SOLIDARITY COULD SET THEM OFF. IN THAT CASE A SIZEABLE POLICE AND MILITARY EFFORT COULD BE REQUIRED TO STOP THEM.
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